



Scripture nugget: Before they call, I will answer

Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and the one who seeks, finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened (Matthew 7:7-8).

Before they call, I will answer (cf. Isaiah 65:24). God has a heart more tender than that of the best father or mother, and anticipates our needs. Jesus assures us that our prayers for our needs will be answered (cf. Matthew 7:7-8). Which good parent will not provide for the needs of his/her child? Jesus reminds us that if sinful human parents know how to provide good things for their children, how much more our Heavenly Father will give good things to those who ask Him (cf. Matthew 7:11). Indeed, St Paul reminds us: if God did not hesitate to give us His only begotten Son, how will He now withhold any good thing from us? (cf. Romans 8:32). However, God has His own timing and His own ways which we may not understand. *For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, My thoughts higher than your thoughts (Isaiah 55:8-9).*

Trusting God even when our prayers appeared unanswered. *In the days when He(Jesus) was in the flesh, He offered prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears to the One Who was able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His reverence (Hebrews 5:7).* Jesus sets us a great example to pray consistently and trust in God steadfastly. In His agony, Jesus prayed fervently for the strength to carry out God's will. He was heard because of His reverence and all-consuming desire to do God's will. However, to those without the eyes of faith, Jesus would appear to be a complete failure, a hapless victim of gross human injustice. Even His disciples lost faith temporarily and deserted Jesus. However, though the situation on the surface looked so desperate and hopeless, the truth is Jesus accomplished His mission on earth perfectly and is greatly rewarded by God the Father. Oftentimes we do not have the wisdom to discern that God is answering our prayers in a much better way than we expect. Our perspective is usually short-term and targeted at material good whilst God is always looking at eternity and our eternal good and that of others. When Jesus died a tragic and shameful death on the Cross, none of His disciples dared come forward to claim His dead Body. However, God's Providence saw Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, two men of substantial standing in the Jewish community coming forward unexpectedly to take care of this important matter. Thus, even when our prayers seemed to be unanswered, our faith should assure us that God is concretely doing something. Indeed, God is able to accomplish far more than all we ask or imagine by the power at work within us (cf. Ephesians 3:20).

Conversation with Jesus: Precious Lord, You know our needs even before we realize it. You say: Seek first the Kingdom of God, then all things you need will be given to you (cf. Matthew 6:33). Once we put our allegiance to God as our first priority, we put ourselves into the blessings and favour of God Who will grant us more than we expect. Give us the confidence to present to You our needs and to understand that our needs will be answered. Give us the discernment to see the Hand of God in our daily lives and to place ourselves in complete trust of God's Providence. Mary, Mother of Salvation, pray for me. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus.